

Thanksgiving

今 泉 信 宏

Thanksgiving Day has a long history in America. By the time the first immigrants (the Pilgrims) from England arrived in Massachusetts in 1620, they had lost most of their possessions, food and water: some had been slaughtered along the way and thrown into the deep sea. So they came ashore practically without anything to speak of. It was chilly and cold and had no idea of how to get over the first cold winter. Luckily enough, however, American Indians (now called Native Americans) came to see and were curious about the new intruders to their native land. They took pity on those starving immigrants and taught them the skill of survival - eating corn and wild turkey, which were foreign to the Pilgrims. So they gave thanks to God for their survival. Thus was instituted the Day of Thanksgiving and they celebrate it each year in America ever since. Strangely enough, however, they gave thanks to God but not to the Native Americans who taught them how to survive: later on the whites began to call the Native Indians savages and started the process of annihilation. This is a sad part of American history. So Thanksgiving Day is supposed to be the day of giving thanks not only to God but also to the Natives Americans.

Some of us say that we live in the age of uncertainty, hopelessness and disenchantment and we've got nothing to be thankful for. Every day is filled with unhappy news about war, rumors of war, skirmishes, starvation and possible threat of nuclear annihilation. It is true that we are under constant political, social and psychological pressure to perform well and feel we are a failure at times, but when we think of family, home, school and the fact that we are alive, we should have a lot to be thankful for. So perhaps we all should set one day a year as the day of thanksgiving: giving thanks to God, the Giver of life for an opportunity to be ably involved in this world. Each day is a new day and a day of thanksgiving.

(宗教主事)